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RETAIL PRODUCE MANUAL

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BELTSVILLE BRANCH

MANAGING AND SCHEDULING OF A RETAIL PRODUCE DEPARTMENT

MARKETING BULLETIN NO. 11
Agricultural Marketing Service and
Federal Extension Service
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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BELTSVILLE BRANCH

This is the fourth of a group of bulletins that the Department will issue on handling produce in retail stores. The preceding Marketing Bulletins are: No. 2, Organization of the Work Area for Handling Produce in Retail Stores; No. 3, Ordering, Receiving, and Storage of Produce in Retail Stores; No. 4, Trimming Produce in Retail Stores. These bulletins, together with additional planned chapters, will make up a "Retail Produce Manual."

The bulletins present step-by-step instructions that will help retail store managers and workers save time and money in produce handling and will enable them to offer consumers produce of better quality with less loss from waste and spoilage. The publications in this group will also be helpful to specialists of the Cooperative Extension Service and State Departments of Agriculture in their marketing work with retail stores. These bulletins summarize the results of recent research by the Agricultural Marketing Service looking toward improvement in the handling of produce in retail stores. The research is part of a broad program to improve efficiency in marketing of agricultural products, reduce marketing costs, and expand markets for farm products.

The retail store operator is the last link in the long chain of produce handlers and is the only person with whom the consumer has direct contact. Unless the retailer offers fresh produce in a satisfactory manner to the consumer, direct or indirect losses may reflect back through each handler to the growers.

This publication was prepared with the assistance of Supermarket News, New York, N. Y.

This chapter should be inserted in a ring binder immediately following Marketing Bulletin No. 4, "Trimming Produce in Retail Food Stores."

June 1960

THE PRODUCE MANAGER'S JOB IS--

FIRST: TO MANAGE--

Management of a produce department requires several skills; (1) Preparation of schedules, (2) enforcement of company policies, (3) training of personnel and (4) merchandising.

Scheduling for Produce

Ordering is a way of scheduling movement of produce through the store. (See Marketing Bulletin No. 3, "Ordering, Receiving and Storage of Produce in Retail Stores" for details.)

Production Scheduling involves listing products which need preparation before sale, when and how to prepare them.

Scheduling for Employees

Task Assignments for individual employees provides a list of jobs to be performed throughout the day.

Weekly Work Schedules inform the employee as to when he is to report to and leave work, and his break and lunch periods.

Supervision --seeing that work is done correctly and completed by the time it is needed.

Training --seeing that the employee knows how to do the job.

Merchandising --responsibility here may vary but this usually involves management of displays, price adjustments, and customer contacts.

SECOND: TO WORK WITH HIS HANDS--

Some physical work is expected of most produce department managers; however, this work should be considered secondary to his managerial duties.

Remember--Get your management work done first,

then help with the physical work.

SCHEDULING

Plan ahead

The produce department of a supermarket to be efficient must have realistic work assignments. Scheduling, or planning ahead, is the first step in managing a produce department. Thorough scheduling is not easy, but it is the only way a produce manager can make the best use of his personnel and get the work done on time.

Scheduling is divided into two parts:

Keeping track of the produce.

Planning to make the best use of personnel.

PRODUCTION RECORDS

Be prepared

Don't over produce

In departments where produce is packaged, wrapping, bagging and price-marking must be done before the items are needed on the counter. The manager cannot wait until holes develop in the display. However packaging should not be done too far in advance or spoilage may develop.

He must keep in mind:

Shelf life

1. The shelf life of the product.

Speed of sale

2. The speed with which items sell.

3. The lag time, or time required to get the product ready for sale and on display.

Labor use

4. The full use of employees' time. The crew can package and price-mark less perishable items in advance.

Rewraps

5. The amount of produce which must be reworked for return to the display.

Careful records must be kept at all times in order to give full consideration to these and other factors.

In Scheduling for the Product, First:

Keep sales records of individual items
(Weekly or daily, depending on the product)

Keep movement records

This means recording at the end of the day or week the quantity of each item sold. Regular store inventory records are useful for obtaining weekly movement. Production sheets can be used to obtain daily movement. Only by keeping this record faithfully will a proper scheduling job be done. The second major step is to:

Determine the production lag time on various commodities

Find time lag

This means determining the average time required to package, price-mark, and display each of the major commodities. This "lag time" on lettuce, cabbage, corn, etc., will be a fairly constant figure that can be used each time a schedule is made for the work force. From time to time it is suggested these be rechecked.

Then - Prepare Your Production Schedule

With these two sets of figures--the record of sales for each commodity and the production lag time for each commodity--it is possible to determine what to package, in what order to package, and when each item must be ready to be put on the display counter. Remember, in any production scheduling the above five steps should be kept in mind.

Use Production Sheets

Work orders

Production sheets are simply sheets of instructions outlining work to be done. The manager lists the items of produce he wants packaged or prepared for sale. Usually there is a place for an employee to record the work he completes. These sheets may also have space on which to list the carryover of product so that daily sales of individual items can be determined. The instructions may be recorded many different ways; for instance, they can be put on a blackboard. In the form below, the manager has listed the items he wants prepared. The employees check the carryover and enter it in the appropriate column. They then prepare the new merchandise required to make the initial setup.

PRODUCE
BACKROOM PRODUCTION SHEET

Date 9/6
Day Monday

Item	Unit	Price	Unused carryover	Daily production ordered				Produced
				For setup	A.M. 9-12	P.M. 12-3	P.M. 3-6	
Celery, pascal	ea.	29¢	1 1/2	3	2	2	1	~~HH~~ II
Celery, pascal	ea.	25¢	1/2	2	2	1	–	IIII
Celery, white	bun.	35¢	–	1	1	1	–	III
Apples, del.	tray	6/45¢	1	2	2	2		~~HH~~
Apples, wsap.	tray	8/39¢	1	2	2	2		~~HH~~ I
Pears, bosc.	tray	35¢ lb.	1/2	1	1	–		II

Mix them up

When scheduling detailed work such as trimming, packaging, or price-marking, maintain a mixture of products. For example, don't schedule lettuce to be packaged all at once. Instead, have a few crates of lettuce worked, then some other items, and return to lettuce later. Working one product too long tends to unbalance production. This causes holes in the counter and extends the age of all of the produce being prepared.

Much waste is prevented if you keep periodic records of produce that is rewrapped, or that is left over at the end of the day.

These records are a means of checking the accuracy of production scheduling, the durability of packages, and the package life of produce.

Rewraps

Record rewraps

Keep a record of all packages returned to the backroom, the reason the packages are returned; that is, spoilage, broken package, or overage. (Most pricing devices have a means of adding a date code to the price label so the age of any package can be easily determined.)

Produce
Rewrap Control

Store 10

Date 9/6

Item	Broken Packages	Price Changes	Spoiled	Overcode	Other
Lettuce	2		1		
Corn				5	
Cherries		26			
Mushrooms					5 make smaller packages

Examine rewrap records for:

Torn packages

A high percentage of broken packages for any item. (This may call for a new packaging method or new materials.)

Too many rewraps

A high number of rewraps for any item. (This may indicate too large a display, poor quality, or improper grading.)

Package Inventory

Check carryover

A check on the quantity of packages left over on display at the end of each day assists the produce manager to control production.

A written record of carryover should be kept when the manager finds many displays are overstocked or empty at the end of the day. This can be used to improve his production schedules .

LABOR SCHEDULING

Daily Assignment of Tasks

Assign tasks

When the produce manager has determined the work to be done and the time when the work should be completed, the next step is to delegate specific tasks to each employee. Make use of their natural abilities and training. Check production and lag time and schedule the exact time the job should be completed. Be sure adequate personnel are assigned to each task.

DAILY TASK ASSIGNMENT SHEET

Store # 73

Date Monday

Department Produce

Name	From - To	Function	Break	Lunch	Break	Dinner
Joe	7-8:30	TRIM	9	11	2	—
	8:30-10:00	Receiving				
	10-2	Bagging				
	2-4	Cleanup				
Bill	1-1:30	Display	2:30	5	7:30	
	1:30-3	PREPACK				
	3:00-3:15	DISPLAY				
	3:15-5:00	PREPACK				
	6:00-8:45	DISPLAY				
	8:45-9:30	TAKE DOWN				
FRED			10	12:30	3	
	8:30-9:30	SET UP				
	9:30-4:30	DISPLAY				
	4:30-5:00	PREPARE ORDER				
	5:00-5:30	DISPLAY				

Balance work between jobs

Separate operations such as trimming and pricing--both keyed to wrapping--should be scheduled so as to keep production moving. Naturally, some backlog accumulates in different operations, but don't let commodities jam up at any one point. Balance work between operations or shift help to prevent backlogs.

Weekly Labor Schedule

Once daily task assignment sheets have been calculated, using production sheets as a guide, it is very simple to develop a weekly work schedule for the best use of available personnel.

Schedule for production needs

Compromises often have to be made in order to give each person a reasonable weekly schedule. However, scheduling work with production needs in mind is a better practice than trying to develop a production schedule for the convenience of the employees.

WEEKLY LABOR SCHEDULE

Store # 73

Week Ending 9/6

Department Produce

Name	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total	Daily Total
Monday																	
Joe	✓	✓	✓	✓	(L)	✓	✓	✓	✓							8	
Bill							✓	✓	✓	✓	(L)	✓	✓	✓	30/	7 1/2	
Fred		/30	✓	✓	✓	/	(L)/	✓	✓	✓	30/					8	
																	23 1/2
Tuesday																	
Joe	✓	✓	✓	✓	(L)	✓	✓	✓	✓							8	
Fred						/30	✓	✓	✓	/	(L)/	✓	✓	✓	30/	8	
																	16
Wednesday																	
Thursday																	

Stagger breaks

Don't forget to allow for lunch and break periods. The schedule should arrange each employee's rest periods so that someone is on duty at all times.

SUPERVISION

Be firm but fair in seeing that assigned jobs are completed in the time allotted.

Find out why a job was not completed on schedule before accusing a person of loafing. Check the facts.

Maybe--

Poor quality

The quality of the produce is bad, requiring extra sorting time.

Not enough time allowed

The standard set may not have been adequate in the first place.

Look at the job from the standpoint of the employee. Can the job be done by this employee in the time allotted? If not, adjust the time. Keep demands realistic.

Go out of the way to praise good work

Even though good work is expected, don't forget to compliment the good worker.

Praise is sometimes better than money!

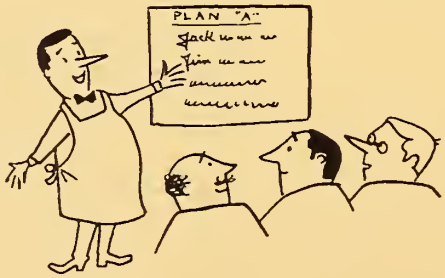
TRAINING

Teach the best way

The employee may not know how to do the job. Teach him the easy way--the proper way. Check to see that he uses proper methods.

In supermarket operations the job of training individual clerks largely falls on the department manager.

IT IS THE MANAGER'S RESPONSIBILITY to see that each person in his department knows how to do the tasks assigned.



MERCHANDISING

Many of the decisions on merchandising and pricing are no longer left to the produce manager in modern supermarkets. One of the reasons for this is to allow him more time for supervising employees.

However, a number of important merchandising functions still depend primarily on the produce manager. Some of these are:

Display Management

Displays

How much to display, where to locate displays, how the display should be built, when to rotate and when to remove older merchandise are some of the display decisions necessary. (More details on display management will be given in a future marketing bulletin on display.)

Price Adjustments

Prices

Most price changes by produce managers are made to move an overstocked item or one which is too ripe to hold.

Customer Relations

Customers

Customer contacts are extremely important. The produce manager should handle refunds efficiently and keep in touch with the customers in order to get their reactions to his department.

MANAGEMENT FIRST-THEN DO THE PHYSICAL WORK AFTERWARD

When all management tasks are completed the manager may assist in production jobs.

Copies of this publication, the fourth chapter of a Retail Produce manual and designated Marketing Bulletin No. 11, may be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C. The price of this bulletin is 20 cents each.

Copies of the first three chapters of this Retail Produce Manual may also be purchased. The prices are as follows:

MB No. 2. Organization of the Work Area for Handling Produce in Retail Stores. 15¢

MB No. 3. Ordering, Receiving, and Storage of Produce in Retail Stores. 15¢

MB No. 4. Trimming Produce in Retail Stores. 25¢

In quantities of 100 copies or more the price per copy is discounted 25 percent. Cash or money order should accompany your order to the Superintendent of Documents.

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